

# HOME

By

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To the Faculty of Washington State University:

The members of the Committee appointed to examine the thesis of  
MAZDAK SHADKAM find it satisfactory and recommend that it be accepted.

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## ACKNOWLEDGMENT

To those people whom I love

# HOME

## Abstract

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The work “Home” represents an installation that is made upon the physical and emotional interactions of human being with a space called “Home.” It touches upon common perceptions of “Home” and also deciphers some cultural, personal and interactive experiences that the artist himself has gone through with the concept of “Home.”

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In the March of 2010 – clearly remembering the refreshing scent of springy days, I was in the middle of packing my luggage and getting prepared to emigrate from my **home** in Iran to the United States with my wife. I was experiencing an amalgam of different feelings and the time was full of dizziness, but one thing was surprisingly bold in my thoughts: **Home**.

After four years, I am here in the States reflecting on those days and the days before those days and the days after those days and there is one thing in common amongst all of those or these days: I am still thinking about **Home**.

The body of work in my MFA Thesis Exhibition presents some sculptural and video elements that form a spatial installation. In general, this three-dimensional space expresses the idea of **home**, either as a physical object or a mental atmosphere. Within this spatial concept of home, first I have tried to explore the relationship between the elements that exist in the space of the installation. On the other hand, by defining an inner space with an outer one, I have tried to decipher the idea of a **transition** from one level of perception to another. **Transitions** such as entering in and going out, living and dying, attaching and detaching, growing and rotting, falling asleep and waking up and holding and releasing are the notions that I explore with this work.

Below I define some key terms that are conceptually tied to me as the artist and the installation itself:

## **The Home**

Since I was a child, I have been having this **desire** of owning a place called **home** for not only me, but the whole family to be stable and settled down. As a family, we have been constantly losing good opportunities and struggling with big and small problems just because we were not stable enough to focus on our dreams; the **agony** side of the **life** has been always heavier; something called home was missing.

## **The World**

The term **world** has so many different meanings depending on who is using it, so it can be a philosophical term, a theological one, or a term that is used repeatedly in politics. My definition of this term is the **perception** of the **space** at the **moment**.

## **The Life**

How I define the meaning of **life** is the aggregation of those **moments** in which my **body** and my **mind** become one single **unity** and experience a very **dense energy** surrounding me. This energy could be either agony or relief.

## **The Desire**

One of the meanings of the term **desire** that works for me the most is a conscious impulse toward something that promises enjoyment or satisfaction in its attainment. **Desire** is what has been defining my moments since I was a child. It has shaped the best and the worst moments of my life; **desire** is a controller.

### **The Agony**

**Agony** is an extreme mental or physical pain, an intense pain of mind or **body**. It even means the struggle that precedes death.

### **The Body**

For me, the sensation of stability and settlement has a direct relation to my **body**. Although the **desire** of owing a place called **home** still exists, I have learned to define my **body** as **home**: it is where I live in, the whole time – it is the very part of the **world**.

### **The Clothes**

The affect of what I call **clothes** in my **world** is undeniable. The reason I mentioned it as “what we call **clothes**” instead of saying “what we wear” is that my perception of **Clothes** is in direct relation to the distance that it has to my **body**. When it is worn, touching my **body**, and my **body** touches it, **clothes** becomes part of my present **world**; there are momentary physical interactions happening – my **clothes** is becoming the reminiscent of the self, whereas when it is within a distance to me and my **body**, it becomes nostalgic and draws my attention to the past and memory.

### **The Bed**

A **bed** not only is always part of a **space**, but is a **space** itself. In my mind, it is the simplified version of **home**; we get in the territory of the **bed** to sleep, relax, study, make love, to do some sort of activity. At the same time we get off the **bed** and leave that



territory. This defines an **inside** versus **outside** that is inherent of the **bed**.

### **The Goldfish**

As an Iranian, I was raised being around **goldfish**. In traditional Persian (Iranian) culture, **goldfish** has been always considered as some sort of pet and in classical Persian architecture, the garden of a house includes a central rectangular pond for keeping goldfish. On top of that, to celebrate the New Year's Eve – which in Iran, is the first day of spring, Iranians set up a table including several elements that shows different aspects of life such as apple, vinegar, garlic, coins, **goldfish**, etc. Apple is an emblem for health and beauty, vinegar shows the old and patience, garlic stands for medicine, the coin represents wealth, and **goldfish** expresses the **transition** in general. This can be perceived as a **transition** from **life** to **death**, the transition from **death** to **life**, and since one of the meanings of the last month of the year in Persian calendar is fish, it can be understood as the transition from winter to spring.

### **The Wheatgrass**

**Wheatgrass** is the other element of the Iranian New Year's table beside **goldfish**. A couple of days before spring arrives, people grow **wheatgrass** in a tray or a plate, nurture it very carefully and by the New Year's Eve it is all grown and green. **Wheatgrass** of the table culturally represents greenness and yield and is a sign of growth.

## The Box

I take a look around, simplify the shapes and forms, then what I see the most are **boxes** all over the place. We as human beings are tied to the idea of the **box**; we live in the **boxes**, we work in the **boxes**, we drive the **boxes**, we put things in the **boxes** and so on. The **box** for me represents boundaries and territories. It is a sign of **inside/outside**.

## The Space

### Outside

A white **box** with some living **wheatgrass** on top is popped out of the wall. On the other wall, there are **boxes** with mummified **clothes** in them, doing the same thing.

### Inside

Two **goldfish** living on a suspended **bed** freely swim and interact with each other. Sometimes they are gone, but they will come back again. The bed has no attachment to the floor; it is free.

**Wheatgrass** are growing on top of a **box**. Something on the other side of the inner **space** are growing as well. It seems they are releasing some sort of energy and expanding.

On the other wall there is a hand suspended in a white **space**. It is interacting with something invisible or unknown, perhaps with those expanding objects.

There are **boxes** on the other side of the space, merged to the wall. There are

**clothes inside** the **boxes** mummified. Who knows how old they are. They are submerged in wax. There is a very intense energy existing in them it seems. They are the holder of memory....

.....

Eventually I have made my **Home**. I own this **space** and am experiencing my new **world** with it. It is all made off of my **desires**. It reminds me of all the **agonies** I experienced but it is full of **life**.